

# Iowa Crops & Weather



USDA – National Agricultural Statistical Service  
Iowa Field Office

210 Walnut, Room 833 • Des Moines, Iowa 50309-2195  
515-284-4340 • 1-800-772-0825 • FAX 515-284-4342 • [nass-ia@nass.usda.gov](mailto:nass-ia@nass.usda.gov)  
To access NASS reports – <http://www.usda.gov/nass/>



Issued March 3, 2008

Vol 08-03

For the month of February, 2008

## SNOWY FEBRUARY

Snow and ice continued to build during the month of February making roads difficult to traverse, slowing grain movement, and adding stress to cattle. The average depth of **snow cover** for the month of February was 7 inches. **Frost penetration** averaged 15 inches compared to last year's 13 inches. **Soil moisture** availability rated zero percent very short, 3 percent short, 63 percent adequate, and 34 percent surplus. **Grain movement** for the state was 19 percent none, 37 percent light, 38 percent moderate, and 6 percent heavy.

**Availability of hay and roughage** supplies was 27 percent short, 72 percent adequate, and 1 percent surplus. **Quality of hay and roughage supplies** was 7 percent poor, 39 percent fair, and 54 percent good. **Utilization of stubble fields** for grazing rated 52 percent none, 31 percent limited, 12 percent moderate, and 5 percent extensive.

**Hog and pig losses** in February were 19 percent below average, 79 percent average, and 2 percent above average. **Cattle and calf losses** were 12 percent below average, 80 percent average, and 8 percent above average.

### IOWA PRELIMINARY WEATHER SUMMARY, February 2008 Provided by State Climatologist Harry Hillaker

General Summary. February temperatures averaged 17.3 degrees or 6.9 degrees below normal while precipitation averaged 1.82 inches or 0.87 inches above normal. This ranks as the 23<sup>rd</sup> coldest and 13<sup>th</sup> wettest February among 136 years of state records.

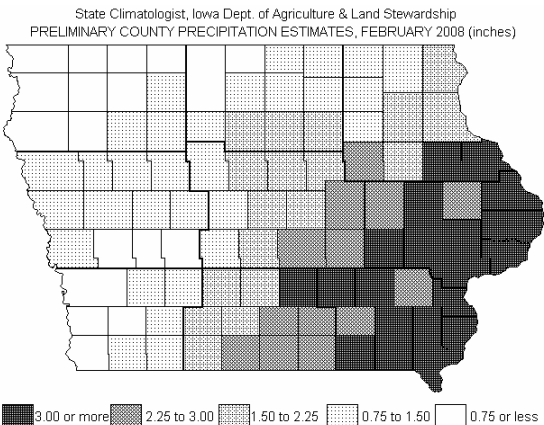
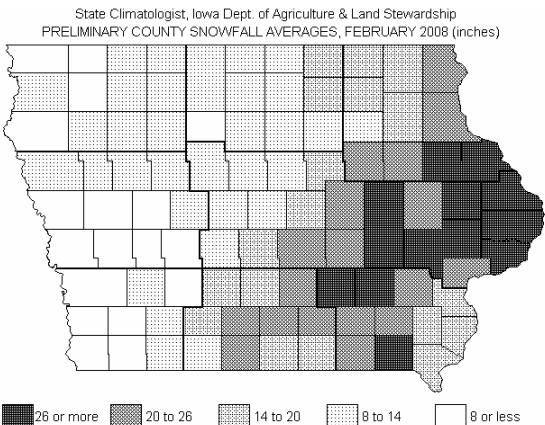
Temperatures. February began with above normal temperatures for the first 5 days of the month with readings climbing as high as 46 degrees at several southeast Iowa locations on the 4<sup>th</sup>. However, colder than normal weather was the rule for all but three (8<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>) of the remaining days of the month. Glenwood reported the highest temperature for the month with a 49 degrees reading on the 24<sup>th</sup>. This was the first February since 1979 that the temperature has failed to reach 50 degrees somewhere in Iowa. Temperatures averaged more than 20 degrees below normal on the 10<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>. Sibley reported a low temperature of -15 degrees on the 10<sup>th</sup> while Mason City recorded a wind chill of -39 degrees. Actual temperatures fell to -23 degrees at Sanborn on the morning of the 20<sup>th</sup> while wind chill readings plunged to -45 degrees at Spencer and Estherville (-69 degrees on the old wind chill chart in use prior to 2001). This was Iowa's lowest wind chill since January 10, 1997.

Heating Degree Days Totals. Home heating requirements, as estimated by heating degree day totals, averaged 21 percent greater than normal, but 1 percent less than last February. Thus far this heating season (since July 1, 2007) degree day totals are running 4% greater than one year ago and 1 percent greater than normal.

Precipitation. The most noteworthy aspect of February's weather was heavy snowfall. Measurable snow fell somewhere in the state on all but 8 days of the month. The first of the larger events came on the 3<sup>rd</sup> when snow fell across the southeast one-half of Iowa with 7 to 12 inches falling from south central into east central Iowa. Just a few days later snow fell over the southeast three-fourths of the state with 7 to 16 inches accumulating along a Creston to Dubuque line. Snow fell over all but far southwest Iowa on the 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> with 3 to 6 inches across northern Iowa. On the 14<sup>th</sup> snow fell across the northeast one-quarter of Iowa with 8 inches at Decorah. Finally, the southeast two-thirds of the state endured blizzard conditions on the 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> with 3 to 6 inches of wind driven snow along a Creston to Decorah line. Monthly snowfall totals reached 40.7 inches at Oskaloosa and 40.3 inches at Lowden. These totals were just shy of the state record monthly snowfall of 44.0 inches set at Red Oak in January 1936. At Maquoketa a total of 33.6 inches of snow fell in February. This not only easily set a record for snowiest month at that location but pushed their seasonal snowfall total to a record 66.6 inches (old record of 58.2 in 1974-1975). Snowfall totals were only near normal in western Iowa, thus resulting in a statewide average snowfall of 15.6 inches for the month, 9.3 inches above normal. This ranks as the fourth snowiest February in Iowa and 13<sup>th</sup> snowiest calendar month among 121 years of records.

Winter Summary. Temperatures during the three mid-winter months averaged 18.2 degrees or 3.3 degrees below normal while precipitation totaled 5.05 inches or 1.88 inches above normal. This ranks as the 23<sup>rd</sup> coldest and 8<sup>th</sup> wettest winter among 135 years of state records. The last colder and snowier winter was that of 2000-2001.

Outlook. Unusually snowy winters such as this one have frequently been followed by below normal temperatures during March. This tendency towards below normal temperatures continues through summer but with steadily decreasing odds. There are conflicting signals for March precipitation, but a tendency toward wetter than normal weather during April in year's starting with a La Niña event, and following unusually snowy winters. La Niña then increasingly favors below normal precipitation from May through the end of the year.



Snow Cover and Frost Penetration for the Month of February

Item	Districts									State	Last Month	Last Year
	NW	NC	NE	WC	C	EC	SW	SC	SE			
	Inches	Inches	Inches	Inches	Inches	Inches	Inches	Inches	Inches	Inches	Inches	Inches
Snow cover	9	7	11	4	6	8	3	4	7	7	7	8
Frost penetration	25	15	15	24	14	9	10	8	9	15	13	13

February Weather Summary For Iowa Agricultural Statistics Service Prepared by AWIS, Inc.											
STATION	AIR TEMPERATURE				PRECIPITATION			HDD TOT	HDD DFN	DAYS OF 32 COLD	DAYS OF 28 COLD
	HI	LO	AVG	DFN	TOTAL	DFN	DAYS				
	North West District										
Estherville	33	-18	14	-5	0.13	-0.68	3	1,477	108	29	29
Sioux Center	40	-20	16	-6	0.58	-0.15	5	1,404	147	29	29
Spencer	35	-20	14	-7	0.28	-0.45	6	1,481	175	29	29
Spirit Lake	37	-20	15	-3	0.42	-0.34	3	1,450	284	29	29
	North Central District										
Britt	34	-18	12	-9	0.76	-0.19	7	1,520	228	29	29
Humboldt	37	-16	14	-8	0.96	0.13	9	1,477	198	29	28
Mason City	34	-14	15	-5	0.84	-0.06	7	1,451	112	29	29
Osage	33	-14	13	-8	1.62	0.72	8	1,516	277	29	29
	North East District										
Decorah	37	-17	16	-6	0.98	0.12	10	1,426	145	29	27
Dubuque	35	-10	16	-6	2.75	1.36	15	1,398	131	29	28
Elkader	39	-17	13	-9	2.41	1.19	13	1,505	393	29	28
Fayette	34	-11	13	-8	1.17	0.00	11	1,504	220	29	28
Waterloo	35	-11	17	-4	1.66	0.53	11	1,390	91	29	26
	West Central District										
Carroll	42	-15	17	-6	0.99	0.14	6	1,395	157	29	28
Castana	43	-16	17	-8	0.98	0.32	6	1,373	88	29	28
Guthrie Center	42	-13	18	-6	0.94	-0.17	6	1,372	163	29	27
Harlan	43	-12	18	-7	0.58	-0.26	8	1,344	95	29	28
Jefferson	40	-14	17	-6	1.32	0.47	11	1,396	158	29	28
Logan	47	-11	19	-6	0.53	-0.32	4	1,329	151	29	27
Rockwell City	40	-17	15	-9	1.15	0.41	5	1,445	231	29	28
Sac City	40	-18	14	-7	1.05	0.14	3	1,463	186	29	29
Sioux City	45	-12	19	-6	0.52	-0.23	3	1,334	136	28	27
	Central District										
Boone	40	-15	16	-8	1.51	0.40	11	1,420	189	29	28
Des Moines	41	-10	21	-5	1.52	0.36	9	1,280	115	29	25
Grundy Center	37	-13	14	-6	2.05	1.00	10	1,458	155	29	28
Marshalltown	37	-11	18	-6	1.26	0.14	10	1,368	130	29	26
Newton	40	-12	15	-10	1.72	0.63	8	1,431	246	29	28
Perry	41	-12	17	-6	1.09	0.24	8	1,389	143	29	28
Toledo	36	-12	14	-8	1.83	0.85	10	1,464	201	29	28
	East Central District										
Cedar Rapids	36	-10	17	-7	2.30	1.23	10	1,393	179	29	27
Davenport	39	-9	19	-6	3.33	2.34	14	1,323	157	27	24
Iowa City	37	-9	19	-8	1.86	0.85	8	1,328	199	28	26
Lowden	37	-14	14	-9	4.70	3.33	15	1,465	253	29	28
Maquoketa	34	-10	14	-9	4.12	3.01	14	1,477	221	29	28
Muscatine	43	-2	20	-8	3.26	2.13	12	1,314	28	28	26
	South West District										
Atlantic	44	-10	22	-2	0.46	-0.44	8	1,245	35	29	27
Clarinda	40	-8	19	-7	1.07	0.10	9	1,321	172	29	28
Glenwood	49	-7	22	-5	0.71	-0.12	6	1,253	128	29	27
Red Oak	46	-7	21	-7	0.71	-0.35	5	1,277	176	29	28
Sidney	46	-6	22	-6	0.22	-0.67	2	1,239	133	29	27
	South Central District										
Allerton	41	-9	18	-8	0.92	-0.10	5	1,349	-38	29	28
Beaconsfield	39	-10	18	-8	2.25	1.45	7	1,364	201	29	28
Chariton	41	-12	18	-8	2.32	1.22	8	1,370	200	29	28
Indianola	40	-11	17	-9	1.85	0.78	8	1,381	226	29	28
Leon	42	-12	19	-7	2.26	1.22	11	1,343	188	29	28
	South East District										
Bloomfield	46	-8	20	-9	3.01	1.96	11	1,309	229	29	27
Burlington	46	0	24	-4	2.83	1.61	9	1,192	87	28	24
Ottumwa	39	-8	20	-6	2.00	1.04	11	1,290	163	28	24
Washington	44	-9	18	-10	3.28	2.36	14	1,359	109	29	28

Precipitation (rain, melted snow or ice) in inches. Precipitation Days = Days with precipitation of 0.01 inch or more. Air Temperatures in Degrees Fahrenheit. Copyright 2008: AWIS, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

PRESRT STD  
POSTAGE & FEES PAID  
USDA  
PERMIT NO. G-38

IOWA CROPS & WEATHER IS PUBLISHED BY USDA NATIONAL  
AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE, IOWA FIELD OFFICE, 210 WALNUT  
ST. RM 833, DES MOINES IA 50309. POSTMASTER, SEND ADDRESS CHANGES  
TO IA CROPS & WEATHER, C/O SD AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS, PO BOX  
5068 SIOUX FALLS SD 57117